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ABSTRACT

A number of terms have been used for the concept of intercultural education, such as transcultural, cross-cultural, global, and multicultural education. A recurrent theme in history and literature, intercultural communication has received scant attention as a subject worthy of teaching in its own right. Among the more notable books on intercultural education is "Intercultural Education in the American School" by William Vickery and Stewart Cole. Their contribution is notable for its position that intercultural education should permeate the whole of the American education system rather than be added to any one subject or sequential grouping of grades. Another is John Walsh's "Intercultural Education in the Community of Man," one of the first full treatments of the subject from a theoretical standpoint. A more recent addition to the literature is "Multicultural Education: A Cross Cultural Training Approach," edited by Margaret Pusch, which contains chapters on concepts and historical development as well as on curriculum and teaching strategies. Among the other contributors to the body of knowledge on intercultural education are articles written by educational professionals on the spread of telecommunication systems and films dealing with intercultural themes. However, to properly orient people toward intercultural education in the future, scholars must decide on the terminology to be used and must work more closely with educators. (HOD)

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INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND INTERCULTURAL SKILLS

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INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Anyone interested in writing on intercultural education does so as a labor of love. Without a fixed body of literature, a clear pattern of origin and history or key names from which to trace developments, we are like people trying to climb a mountain with no trails. We know the mountain exists because we're on it. We know it has a summit, and we think we can reach it by drawing from past knowledge and by sharing with our companions plans and methods. We are a small group facing a challenge, and the rest of the world seems relatively unconcerned with what we consider important or with the outcome of our endeavors.

This paper is a modest attempt to place in perspective what is meant by intercultural education in the United States by someone who has taught intercultural education for the past ten years, and has had contact with related disciplines on a university campus and with community projects involving practical applications. Within these pages we will focus on terminology, historical perspectives, notable contributions, guidelines from practitioners and suggestions for the future. Like most people teaching intercultural communication, this writer considers herself an educator only in the broadest sense of the word, but not as an intercultural educator which implies affiliation with an education department or school. If they are among the readers, it is their responsibility to augment, modify or refute what is presented here.

Terminology

There is little difficulty defining education. It is "... the process by which a culture introduces its members to the skills, attitudes, information, knowledge and values that will make it possible to preserve and enhance the culture" (Walsh, 1973, 10). It is through some form of education that we become a part of our culture. Responsibility for this education varies with the culture; it may be the parents, the school, the church, the government, or a combination of

these. To this definition we might add that education is a lifelong process of growth in intellectual and emotional competency that enables people to cope with human existence both as individuals and as members of groups (Pusch, 1979, 4). To become intercultural the education process must first analyze one's own culture - its precepts, value orientations, and patterns of thinking. An understanding of these facets will then be used as a basis for determining how best to interact with people in another culture. This last process is the focus of intercultural communication.

The difficulty arises in sorting out the overlapping terms: transcultural, intercultural, cross-cultural, global, and multicultural education. All have been used to refer to the education described above. We can find a common core of concern for knowledge, per se, but why should there be so many terms? The Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors (10th edition, 1984) offers its own nomenclature. A researcher investigating intercultural education is referred to multicultural education; this scriptor has been indexed since January 1979 with 354 CIJE citings and 864 RIE; and "global approach" (including the subheading education) lists respectively 712 and 918 entries since October 1974. Cross-cultural education, however, shows 1,361 and 1525 entries since August 1969. This heading includes cultural education. Interestingly enough, the term cross-cultural communication is not indexed; instead the user is referred to intercultural communication which has been included for less than three years. All indications are that a less than mutually accepted systematic use of terms exists. Hoopes and Pusch devote an introductory chapter to definitions choosing multicultural. To some extent, the term multicultural seems to focus on ethnic aspects, but it is true mainly in education-oriented materials. Given the following definitions from Hoopes and Pusch, it is difficult to understand either their distinction or basis for preference:

> Multicultural education is a structured process designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of many different cultures....[It] is not just a set of ethnic or other area study programs but an effort to demonstrate the significance of similarities and differences among culture groups and between individuals within those groups.
>
> Intercultural (cross-cultural) education is educational activity which fosters an understanding of the nature of culture, which helps the student develop skills in intercultural communication and which aids the student to view the world from perspectives other than one's own (Pusch, 1979, 4-6).

If they are both types of education, they are both processes, not just activities, and neither is limited to an ethnic focus. Multicultural education should be as concerned as intercultural with developing communication skills, which do not belong solely to either. The situation is reminiscent of the conversation in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass when Humpty Dumpty says to Alice, "Words mean what I choose them to mean." To this writer, the prefix inter is more descriptive of the desired process goals listed in both definitions quoted than is multi. What is important is the relationship implied by inter: "among, mutual, reciprocal," rather than the quantity of cultures involved (McKechnie, 1979, 955). For this reason intercultural education will be used for the remainder of this paper.

Interest in how people of another culture interpret the life of man and the nature of things has arisen in several disciplines during the last fifty years. Each has chosen terminology and formulated stipulative definitions. And there has been considerable borrowing, just as cultural anthropology borrowed from linguistics to create the terms "emic" and "etic." A pragmatic attitude has prevailed with emphasis on usable knowledge, and allowed scant concern for attention to theory as models or any other form. As a result there is little theory, a proliferation of terms, and even less uniformity in their intended meaning.

Historical Perspective

Intercultural education (or whatever term is used to describe that learning) has not gained wide acceptance. Perhaps it is because that type of education has been seen as a biproduct of learning in the real and fictional worlds. Surely what Marco Polo learned about how to deal with people in cultures new to him could be called an intercultural education. Alexis de Tocqueville's incisive comments about American life in the eighteenth century could be a chapter on North American value orientations in an intercultural text today. In literature, Odysseus' travails in the strange cultures he encounters makes Homer's Odyssey a seventeen year intercultural experience. Lastly, the hypothetical-culture approach used by Swift in Gulliver's Travels and by Orwell in 1984 focuses wholly on our relation to self and society. But somehow intercultural education as an entity did not emerge until recently. We all agree that intercultural learning takes place and has taken place since the beginning of time; as a recurrent theme in history and literature its existence cannot be disputed, but it has received scant attention as a subject worthy of teaching in its own right.

The aftermath of World War II saw the beginning of what Wendell Willkie forecast as One World (Willkie, 1943). We realized that we were interdependent as nation-states and as people. The advent of better communication linkage gave rise to the global village concept. The realization that others starve as we worry about weight control will no doubt produce yet another catch phrase to capture the spirit of mutual understanding and sharing. In spite of the confusion over terminology, our mutually shared goal is the nurturing of non-ethnocentic people with a desire to understand their brothers and sisters in other cultures. It matters not by what name they are known, Walsh's "universal person" (Walsh, 1973), Adler's "multicultural individual" (Adler, 1974), or Gudykunst and Kim's "intercultural person."

> In becoming intercultural, we rise above the hidden grips of culture and discover that there are many ways to be "good," "true," and "beautiful." In this process, we acquire a greater capacity to overcome cultural parochialism and develop a wider circle of identification, approaching the limit of many cultures and ultimately of humanity itself. The process of becoming intercultural ...is like climbing a high mountain. As we reach the mountaintop, we see that all paths below ultimately lead to the same summit and that each path presents a unique scenery. (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984, 232).

So in 1985 we find endorsement of the goal, but diffuse efforts toward realization. In U.S. colleges and universities, Communication departments have introduced intercultural communication courses that encompass many of the goals of intercultural education. Had these been a part of existing Education department courses or a part of active school curricula, the scope of intercultural communication might be more restricted today. Those of us teaching intercultural communication have little or no contact with our colleagues in Education departments.

Notable Contributions

One of the most valuable aspects of preparing a paper of this type is the vast amount of material that is reviewed. Several of the more notable contributions to the literature have been selected for brief discussion. Moving chronologically, the first is Intercultural Education in the American School by William Vickery and Stewart Cole in 1943. Written during World War II, it was a direct attempt to help the schools deal constructively with problems of intercultural and interracial tension at that time. They saw that intercultural education was concerned with behavior directly related to racial, religious, ethnic and socioeconomic group conflicts in which the teacher had the responsibility to know and interpret new findings (Vickery and Cole, 1943, 148). They cited as persistent and difficult the task of determining what U.S. cultural patterns actually are and how they influence behavior. Ethnic differences were treated as one of several components

within a cultural approach to American education, and were considered channels for favorable cultural interaction. The authors outlined a plan for a program of intercultural education from primary grades through senior high school. Their contribution is notable for its position that intercultural education should permeate the whole of the American education system rather than be added to any one subject or sequential grouping of grades. How surprised and disappointed they would be to see that forty years later this planning has remained "on the drawing board."

Most provocative of the older books is John Walsh's Intercultural Education in the Community of Man (1973). It was one of the first full treatments of the subject from a theoretical standpoint. Unfortunately, it does not seem to have had an impact on education circles, nor was it discussed in communication literature. It was scarcely reviewed, and then only in library journals where it was criticized for its somewhat repetitious, "pontifical" quality (Bach, 1973). Nevertheless, the content and thoroughness of treatment are unparalleled. Walsh's thesis is that contemporary people must revise their educational experiences and institutions to foster a knowledge of two cultures, one's own and a universal one drawn from a study of languages, literature and institutions (Walsh, 1973). Intercultural education, as he saw it, is as vast as "...anything that contributes in any way to one's better and fuller understanding of another culture." He wanted individuals to know what another culture thinks and why it thinks that way. He also made an interesting distinction between understanding a culture and being understanding of another culture. By the former he means grasping intellectually the concepts above; by the latter he means openness, receptivity, and sensitivity to those values but not necessarily commitment.

A more recent addition to the literature is Multicultural Education: A Cross Cultural Training Approach (Pusch, 1979). In spite of the title choice, the book

is the best source of information available in the field of intercultural education. It contains chapters on concepts and historical development as well as on curriculum and teaching strategies. This writer would prefer to see the term education used instead of training which traditionally has meant short-term, intensive, culture-specific sessions with a pre-selected group. Nevertheless, the focus of the book is on central educational concerns, and it is indeed more than a manual. Its stated purpose is to provide background, resources and techniques for preparing teachers - and for their faculty. Its approach is multicultural, with "The Case of the United States" forming a subsection of a chapter on the historical development of multicultural education (Pusch, 1979, pp.39-61). But in the following chapter on curriculum, the assumptions are western, that is, the curriculum selections fit the U.S. education pattern, grade by grade. How useful are they to educators functioning in other than western settings? However, the book is a beginning; if the 1981 second printing means that the book is in demand, that is an excellent omen; we need more contributions like this.

Guidelines from Practitioners

A number of worthwhile articles by practicing education professionals are worthy of comment. In Bancroft's (1975) "Teacher Education for the Multicultural Reality," which appears in Wolfgang's book of readings, Education of Immigrant Students, four propositions emerge that are important for teachers dealing with intercultural concepts in multicultural classes. We may summarize the discussion as follows:

1) Teachers need to realize significant differences in concepts that surface in class, for example, that work and play are not of equal value in some cultures. Thus, students (and their parents) may react adversely to school apportionment.

2) Teachers need to be attuned to markedly different world views that affect interaction on a daily basis. He uses two dialogues to show cultural differences in extending invitations.

3) Teachers have little experience analyzing their own culture and therefore lack experience to analyze other cultures.

4) Teachers need to overcome their ethnocentricity.

New ideas? Not really, but the information is oriented toward teacher awareness of the multicultural reality with which they must deal.

Lastly, two outstanding articles that deal specifically with understanding students in the context of their learning milieu deserve mention. One is by Deena Levine (1982), appearing in Samovar and Porter's reader, and concerns the contrast between Saudi Arabian and Algerian ESL (English as a Second Language) students. The culture specific information, perceptions and conclusions make it a model for the kind of teacher training instruction that is essential.

Janis Andersen's (1985) "Educational Assumptions Highlighted from a Cross-Cultural Comparison" stresses the pervasive cultural influences reflected in classroom activity. She also explains how expectations of proper learning environment are linked to one's own experience such that education is "a cultural dictate rather than a universal mandate." In general, she argues for deeper appreciation of other educational systems on the part of teachers.

A word must be added about three other significant contributions; two are books of readings and the third is a collection called Culturgrams. Beyond Experience is a book published by the Experiment for International Living; it offers educators a wide variety of exercises based -- as is their philosophy -- on a pragmatic approach, learning how to build bridges of understanding between people. Towards Internationalism is published by Newbury House; it provides readings useful to teachers in all nations who wish a deeper understanding of the components operating in intercultural communication processes. And finally, Brigham Young University's extensive series of Culturgrams and area studies must not be overlooked. They have introduced thousands of people to new nation-states with brief but insightful material.

Some Suggestions

Among the strongest influences in shaping an intercultural person is mass media. With the spread of telecommunication systems, virtually no place is isolated. While expense and technological problems may limit the use of television in remote areas, radio continues to provide inexpensive and extensive coverage; its importance should not be overlooked. In developing countries with educational radio programming, illiteracy ceases to be a barrier to intercultural understanding. Radio listening is the first step beyond the confines of the group to which one belongs and from which one gains information. Even one transister radio in a small village can provide new horizons in dealing with technical and community problems. As Dodd pointed out, this type of media exposure stimulates further exposure (Dodd, 1982,253). He has included in his chapter on mass media an excellent section on its relationship to culture, and has developed a linear-nonlinear model to show how mass media functions in cultures (Dodd, 1982, 257-9).

Films are another source of intercultural learning that is largely untapped. During the past few years many U.S. produced films have dealt directly with intercultural themes. Winter 1984-5 brought E.M. Forster's Passage to India, Witness, a film on Amish culture, and The Gods Must Be Crazy, an African tribal encounter with the twentieth century in which a Coca-Cola bottle plays the villain. Last year The Chosen and Gandhi contributed to our education. These films play to large and appreciative audiences, yet no attempt has been made to explore the intercultural themes outside the movie theatre. Why not develop a cinema group discussion series similar to that offered by the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions? This yearly set of eight sessions presents structured group discussions focused on specific topics accompanied by specially prepared reading material. It has been well received in the U.S. True, the Great Decisions' audience is self-selected, literate, and middle class; films attract a broader population. People enjoy

discussing what they have seen. Whereas Walsh's idea was to draw from assigned literature (Walsh, 1973), the film suggestion requires less background, commitment, and preparation.

A third suggestion concerns culture shock. For those going abroad (for education, business or pleasure) and for those coming to our shores, the frustration that accompanies the chronological stages of a sojourn in an unfamiliar culture needs full explanation in terms of psychological and physical factors. That it can be a valuable learning experience is often overlooked. If culture-shock were treated not as short-term training or orientation but as education, we could teach it - from physical aspects of jet lag to coping strategies in social environments. We could also teach about re-entry, especially to students returning from study abroad programs; they often feel discouraged and alienated upon return.

Initially, when this paper was suggested to the writer, the theme was how to educate people toward intercultural education in the future. We are not ready for that. Until we have sorted out our diverse terms, and until we have begun to work together with education professionals rather than independently, plotting such a course is premature. We need to examine what has been written, tried and proposed. Then we must research techniques that have not been fully explored. We have a mutual goal but that is not enough. Having a mutual goal will not enable us to climb the mountain.

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